

# Mary Glassman

***TESTIMONY OF  
FIRST SELECTMAN MARY GLASSMAN  
BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 22, 2010***

I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today in support of House Bills 5021 and 5022, concerning the Citizens Election Program.

I am a strong supporter of Connecticut's public financing system. In fact, if public financing were not available, I would not have the opportunity to sit here before you as someone who is exploring a run for Governor. While I have a wealth of ideas, I am not a wealthy person.

The public financing system allows people like me to have the honor of serving our communities and our state. I understand the power of opportunity. I was born in New Britain and was just four when my father died suddenly, leaving my mom to raise four children alone. My brothers and I worked hard to be the first in our family to attend college. But Connecticut held opportunity for people who were willing to work hard to succeed. The Citizens Election Program affords opportunities in that same way.

No longer do you have to be a multimillionaire or a wealthy person in order to seek public office. The working men and women of our state no longer need financial riches to participate in government. If candidates are willing to take their ideas on how to solve the problems facing our state to the people and can garner their support, then candidates for office will have an opportunity to make a difference.

We must also remember the Citizens Election Program was designed to give voters the power to support candidates for office without candidates having to rely on lobbyists and contractors for their support.

Perhaps more importantly, the public financing system has leveled the playing field for candidates financially. Under this system, all donor contributions count equally in meeting the threshold number of qualified contributors. That means a single contribution counts as a qualified donor whether it is a millionaire contributing \$100 or an unemployed mother contributing \$5. No longer are single donors making large contributions the most important people in campaigns.

I believe in the people of Connecticut, and I know they will respond to those who participate in and support the Citizens Election Program. By preserving the system in place now - you will make ideas, not money, the most valuable currency in this election.

I urge the members of the Committee, and the Legislature as well, to work quickly, in a bi-partisan fashion, to protect this valuable example of Democracy which has been created first in Connecticut.

Thank you.